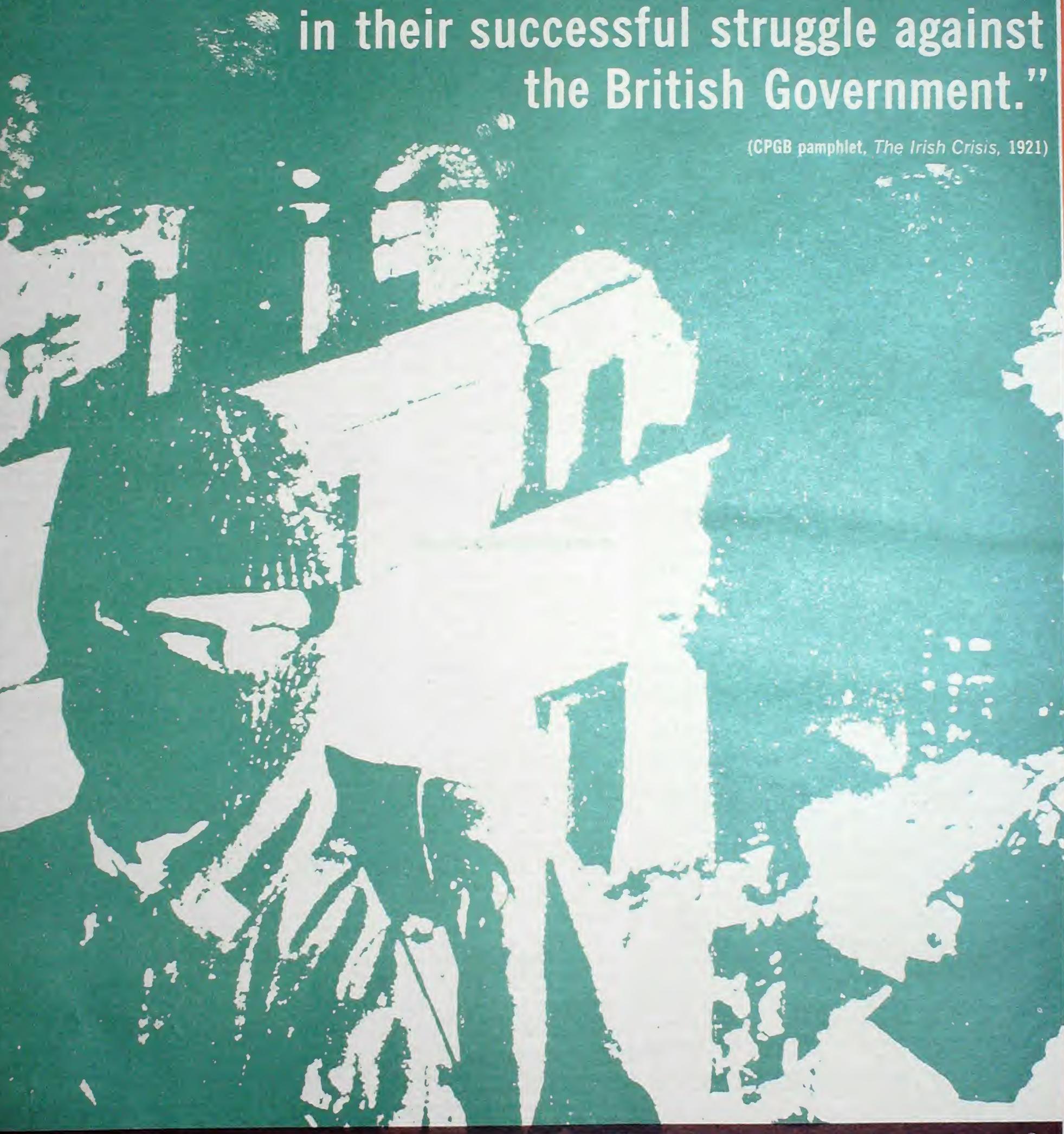


“The Communist Party of Great Britain
hails the dauntless fight of the Irish Republicans
in their successful struggle against
the British Government.”

(CPGB pamphlet, *The Irish Crisis*, 1921)



Join our contingent on the IFM demonstration • 1pm Islington Town Hall • Saturday August 9



Our Party

OUR CPGB was formed 66 years ago. The First Congress took place over July 31 — August 1 1920 at the Cannon Street Hotel in London. It brought together the most determined, the most militant and the most advanced elements in the workers' movement.

Their unity had been greatly aided by Lenin's proletarian internationalist intervention through Comintern and his fraternal advice. "I consider it most desirable" he wrote from Moscow on July 8 1920 "that a Communist Party be speedily organised on the basis of the decisions and principles of the Third International".

These decisions and principles informed the *Call for a Communist Party*. It was issued by a Joint Provisional Committee consisting of outstanding comrades like Tom Bell, Arthur MacManus, William Paul, and Albert Inkpin.

The Bolsheviks, declared the *Call*, had made the idea of revolution "a real live force" that was "rending society at its very roots and challenging the power and authority of capitalism the world over." For the *Call* the October Revolution was "a veritable beacon light indicating the path to follow and the course to pursue". After it the *Call* asked "who now can defend the time-worn ideas still held by socialists of a gradual evolution or peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism?"

For those who brazenly label *The Leninist* "ultra-leftist" this should provide food for thought. Are not such attacks evidence of rightism and a time-worn commitment to achieving socialism through the Labour Party and parliamentary legislation?

Would these types have wanted to join our Party when it was formed? Given its commitment to Irish freedom, soviets, violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat it would seem unlikely. Had they applied would they have been admitted? Definitely not.

Those who see 'positive features' in the *British Road to Socialism*, whether it be the 1950, 1951, 1952, 1958, 1968 or 1978 edition, support or excuse the idea of a gradualist, evolutionary and peaceful transition to socialism. Many of these comrades, like the Straight Leftists and the CCGers, have to find "Marxist-Leninist principles", in one or another edition of the *British Road*, so as to cover their past and present opportunist sins.

The fact is that only *The Leninist* consistently opposes reformism and stands by Marxism-Leninism as enshrined in the founding principles of our Party.

We agree with the *Call* when it states parliamentary democracy is "an instrument of class oppression to be engineered and wielded in the interests of the bourgeoisie".

We agree that "against this sham of parliamentary democracy of capitalism the workers' republic places the method of direct representation and recall, as embodied in the soviet idea".

We agree that what is needed is a Communist Party "that will wage the class war up to the point of revolution, rejecting with disdain all compromise and truck with capitalist reform, but ever seeking to organise and rally the working class to the standard of International Communism".

We agree "communists must be prepared to meet and crush all the efforts of capitalist reactionaries to regain their lost privileges ... in other words, the Communist Party must stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Far from these ideas becoming outdated, everything since 1920 shows that capitalism still means war, unemployment and misery, and can only be ended through revolution. And that requires a Communist Party based on Leninist theory and practice.

Our CPGB has today, a reformist programme and approach to membership. This means it cannot play the revolutionary vanguard role the conditions of the 1980s demand. Communists in Britain have one central task. We must defend and reforge our Party through winning it back to the principles it was founded on in 1920. To this task everything must be subordinated.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Scottish Vanguard

Your criticisms of the new *Vanguard* and reply to the letters of Messrs Donaldson and Cockshott demonstrate the urgent need to re-evaluate the cause of Scottish separatism and its relevance to the CPGB.

It is of little value merely to criticise John MacLean for his subjective mistakes, and following the bourgeois brouhaha displayed after the demise of Shinwell (the man who ran up a close when Churchill brought the tanks to Glasgow) is unnecessarily dismissive. Nor is it the final word when you call a Scottish Workers' Republic a utopian diversion, since in regard to autonomy Marxists advocate not the 'right' to autonomy but autonomy itself as the general and universal principle of a democratic state consisting of a variety of nationalities with sharply differing geographical and other conditions.

To advance autonomy as a right but to advise against its use in Britain is a vital part of a critical understanding which must be reconsidered. Despite the deliberate obfuscation of the real issues behind the 1979 referendum, the majority of voters did vote in favour of devolved authority and although that is quite clearly *not* the same as saying the majority of Scots want separation from England, that question has never been plainly asked...

In the interests of the working classes, and given the concrete situation in Britain, communists advocating the unity of the movement not only in 'British' terms, by pressing most severely for the separatist line, to facilitate the structural alteration in British politics which is already at work in what you rightly term 'British capitalism's deepening problems'.

William Laidlaw
Glasgow

ILWP

The idealism which keeps *The Leninist* sheltered in the bosom of a party which, by your own admission (No.29, page 5) "replaced democratic centralism with bureaucratic centralism before most of the current batch of centrist oppositionists were even born", clinging to the idea of a "revolutionary" CPGB long after the *reality* has ceased to exist, also condemns you to an anti-Marxist analysis of the drive to imperialist war.

"Britain in particular, because it is showing all the signs of being one of the most volatile, dangerous, and vulnerable of the major imperialist powers will mean that revolutionary politics, far from being a luxury, an intellectual pursuit of the few, can and must become the property of millions of workers as soon as possible, so we can make revolution before British imperialism makes nuclear war," (*Ibid.* p.5)

Whereas the New Communist Party idealists argue that the advent of nuclear weaponry must subordinate revolutionary struggle to peaceful coexistence strategy, your brand of idealism argues the flipside of the coin; that the bomb obliges revolutionaries to give history a shove. Arming the working class with revolutionary theory "as soon as possible" is *always* the top priority. But if your editorial board look in the mirror and see revolutionary politics reflected there as "a luxury, an intellectual pursuit of the few", that is a consequence of the rotten subjectivist tradition of left academic posturing in which you are bogged down. The way to transform self-preening academicism into a healthy respect for revolutionary theory is to put into practice Lenin's

repeated insistence on the building of the proletarian vanguard party in unity and conflict with the working class. Only such a party can make the cutting edge of Leninist understanding "the property of millions of workers" — "as soon as possible", or ever.

Your curious assertion that the "volatility" of British imperialism will mean that revolutionary politics "must" become the property of millions of workers can only mean one of two things.

Either you are retreating into a non-dialectical account of class struggle, asserting that revolutionary theory will drop into the laps of the working class as a mechanical consequence of capitalist collapse.

Or you are translating your own subjective impatience and pessimism into an alleged imperative of objective development — "you stupid workers have just got to understand theory, or we've all had it."

Whichever you mean (do you even know yourselves?), the end product is the same: anti-Leninist garbage.

An astounding statement in your lead exposes once and for all your terminal idealism. You write "...the power of modern weapons, far from giving us the luxury of a protracted struggle once war has begun, as Lenin advocated, demands that the imperialist beast is put down as soon as possible."

Incredibly, this asserts that Lenin chose to allow the proletariat and peasant masses of Russia to be pitched into the appalling barbarism of imperialist war, so that revolutionaries could thereby benefit from "the luxury of a protracted struggle." The unmistakable implication is that Lenin and the Bolsheviks could have given history a shove and hastened revolutionary development — and that today British revolutionaries should give history such a shove.

In February 1918, in an article entitled *Strange and Monstrous*, Lenin wrote:

"Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions."

Only your faction's lack of confidence in the revolutionary future of the British working class can explain this inability to grasp the ABC of Marxism.

Certainly the "imperialist beast" must be "put down as soon as possible". The ILWP's awareness of the urgency of this task adds sharpness to our polemics with the CPSU over their misleading support for the reformist CPGB and their lopsided adherence to peaceful coexistence strategy at the unnecessary expense of giving at all times a clear revolutionary lead (sometimes leaving it up to emergent socialist forces in Libya, Ireland, the Philippines etc to spell out the needed revolutionary assault on imperialism).

But what keeps the imperialist beast alive and kicking is the subordination of workers to anti-communist bourgeois ideology — the source of your lousy subjective idealism.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Hull
International
Leninist Workers' Party

Jack Conrad replies:

The "International Leninist Workers' Party" is neither international nor Leninist or even a party. It has no fraternal links internationally, it is ideologically unstable, and certainly does not have the organic relationship to the working class a genuine party has. Originating in the corrupt, dishonest and deluded WRP of Gerry Healy, these erstwhile Trotskyites are still unfortunately tainted with its method of debate.

Only by putting words into our

mouths, inferring this and making up that, do they feel confident in polemic. In the real world such dishonesty is as worthless as the "ILWP". Let us make a few points in reply to the letter from "yours sincerely" Dominic Hull.

1. *The Leninist* considers the question of building a mass revolutionary Communist Party to be central to the fate of the working class. Struggle in the CPGB, and in the world communist movement, (both dismissed as irrelevant, by the irrelevant "ILWP") is, under today's conditions, pivotal to this. The CPGB and the world communist movement are real, the crisis in them is real and the outcome of this crisis will be determined by the real struggle of the working class itself.

2. We make no apology to the "ILWP" in its sectarian wilderness about our open ideological struggle in the CPGB. Without such a fight building a genuine vanguard party is a dream. Such parties are not voted into existence by a handful of WRP drop outs determined on a grand name. They are products of the fusing of the Marxist-Leninist ideological struggle with the class struggle of the proletariat.

3. We do not advocate "giving history a shove". We do not by "implication" criticise Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In Lenin's day there was no real alternative to a protracted struggle for revolution once a war had begun. But, if we based ourselves on this perspective today this would indeed be a luxury, the luxury of the hopeless dogmatist and the criminally negligent. Modern weapons do not dictate pacifism as some in our world communist movement suggest but different revolutionary tactics. Fortunately the existence of living socialism, humanity's experience of nuclear weapons, its knowledge of their effects, and the growing contradiction between capitalist property relations and the needs of mankind mean that it is well within the grasp of the working class — given a vanguard CP — to put down the imperialist beast before World War III is unleashed.

3. The "ILWP" ought to try arguing with our real positions and perhaps have the courage not to suppress letters from Leninists as they have in the past. We might then be able to engage in constructive discussion.

Hate-rag

If the *Morning Star* is on "a course away from Communist Party politics", which in your own words are "thoroughly reformist and parliamentary", how then can Leninists vote "in a way that will re-win the *Morning Star*" for this thoroughly reformist and parliamentary Party as you suggest?

Why the churlish ribbing about the delay in the arrival of the tabloid? Why not welcome it, even if you disagree with much of the views expressed in the paper?

My wife has asked me to pass on her request not to send any more editions of your hate-rag to our home.

John Kirk,
Edinburgh

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.

WRITE TO:
The Editor
BCM Box 928
LONDON
WC1N 3XX



CCG

CONFUSION

THE LONDON Communist Campaign Group aggregate met at long last on July 5 after being aborted back in May because of the US bombing of Libya! No the members of the CCG were not meeting in Tripoli. They simply decided their token presence at anti-US protests was more important than clarifying the way forward for the CCG.

The commitment of the CCG rank and file, its discipline and seriousness was indicated by the laid back fashion in which they turned up. Advertised to begin at 10.30am, things only got going after 11.00am. As if that were not enough, although 125 registered for the aggregate at no time were there more than 92 in the hall. In other words there was a great deal of late coming and early going.

And although comrade Lydie Starkey claimed in her brief organisation report only 80 had been expected; this is almost an admission of failure considering the *Morning Star* reported attendance at the last (aborted) aggregate was 150. Of course the truth was somewhat less, nonetheless if comrade Starkey was telling the truth — and why should we doubt it — the CCG leadership feels its support is on the wane.

Photis Lysandrou confirmed his emergence as the first amongst equals on the CCG Steering Committee. He gave the main opening and replied to discussion relegating other CCG tops to playing a supporting role.

"Today" said Lysandrou "is a critical period which requires a Communist Party". Yet the CPGB is controlled by a "Euro/revisionist leadership committed to the dissolution and erosion of the Communist Party". For Lysandrou therefore the "key question" was how "principled communists set about regaining control" of the CPGB.

In the face of opposition to a CCG split he admitted, splits in countries like Holland and Australia had not been wonderful. They had led to "disastrous consequences" he conceded. Knowing the body of opinion against a split, that the CPGB Executive Committee will not allow itself to be eased aside, let alone make true the dream of one Photis Lysandrou to become a Communist Party leader, arguments for a split must be presented via the back door.

Of course, to all intents and purposes, those in the CCG leadership are committed to a split that the majority of the rank and file do not want. So how do you convince them to support one while

at the same time holding back the 'split now' elements? How, in other words, do you become a general secretary?

Lysandrou declares the CCG in a "no man's land". Lysandrou therefore conveniently discovers 'British peculiarities' in the *Morning Star*. Because it is "owned by the labour movement" it is "able to defend itself against attacks from the rear". Then using the most transparently thin, totally unscientific method, Lysandrou made the assertion that if the "Euro attacks on the *Morning Star* can be blocked so can the Euro attack on the Party".

This will do in the short term. But the ground has to be prepared for the inevitable split. Without stating it openly Lysandrou made it crystal clear for all those who were prepared to grasp the implication of what he was saying that he wants the CCG to declare itself a party following the CPGB's 1987 Congress. The year or so up till then, is for Lysandrou, one for spreading the CCG big-lie that it is fighting to change the CPGB.

We've said from the very beginning of the CCG that is a heterogeneous grouping destined to crack up as soon as it breaks away from the CPGB, and thus the unifying factor of anti-Eurocommunism which keeps it together. Mary Rosser for the anti-'split now' faction claimed, rightly, that the CPGB EC was split 3 or 4 ways. She has already threatened CCG splitters that in the event of a breakaway they cannot guarantee getting the *Morning Star* or even its backing. Interestingly she also had the honesty to admit the CCG would if it split go on to split again "five ways from this meeting alone".

This was amply illustrated in the discussion contributions. Some CCGers like Dave Anderson want no split, some like George Hallam are simply itching for one, some like Harry Munday are for defending the reformist *British Road to Socialism* programme, others like Nuno Guerreiro call for simply dumping it full stop.

Above all at the aggregate there was frustration from the floor at the inability to win the Party, the lack of democracy in the CCG and the continued drift "into the wilderness" by Party members who "should be in the CCG".

Lysandrou did his best to keep this hodge podge of positions together, not by calling for a CCG journal aimed to achieve theoretical and political clarity, but through the rotten compromise. He admitted he had voted against the *BRS* in 1977. Yet claimed that the CCG was defending its "core" — surely Photis you voted against the reformist core in 1977, didn't you?

Predictably on the split things

were equally confused and dishonest. "It is not realistic to win a congress" so "what we want is the name", Lysandrou said for his dominant CCG faction.

For those CCGers who still do not believe us that the CCG is set on a course for an NCP Mark II split think again — it's not if but when — at least if Photis Lysandrou has his way.

Tom Durkin's report was confused and directionless. On the one hand he emphasised the importance of building a Communist Party around "principled" positions, yet on the other he insisted all work must be directed to "shifting Labour onto a new course". This was summed up in his anecdote about good old Labourite Tony Benn. "Benn said to me" the name dropping Durkin boasted, "the CP's weaknesses have been disasterous for the Labour Party". Tom said he commiserated. Perhaps if this is the case Benn should join the CPGB and recruit to it, while Durkin should go and join the Labour Party to which he owes such loyalty.

While Durkin's remarks were pedestrian and boringly predictable those of Mike Hicks were for a change quite fascinating. He showed he is in the no-split faction of the CCG which controls the *Morning Star*. Hicks fully reflected the rank and file's fears of the "wilderness" if there is a split. He implicitly argued against a split — darkly pointing to the NCP as an example of what could happen. He voiced rank and file exasperation that the new rebels in the East Midlands and West Middlesex district committees have not yet come over to the CCG and are being talked to by the EC, not expelled.

Even more interestingly Hicks laid claim, for his faction of the CCG leadership, to the ruling CP's in the socialist countries. After triumphantly reporting that the Czechs, amongst others, had increased their *Morning Star* order, he enigmatically declared "we must take into account what the socialist countries want". And they, he deliberately let slip, do not want a split. So, in contrast to the pro-split faction leader Photis Lysandrou, he insisted the CCG "stands firm" — a crude code word for not splitting.

So what the London CCG aggregate indicated was that its leadership is divided as to the way forward and its rank and file is divided as to the way forward. All that keeps them together and not in five, separate, warring factions is anti-Eurocommunism. Hardly the basis for building a genuine Communist Party.

The Sunday Observer of July 13 suggests that comrade Mick McGahey, President of the Scottish Area NUM and member of our Party's Executive Committee, plans when he retires in a few months to denounce Scargill's militant stance in the union. Also it was reported that on the day of the Durham Miners Gala, Comrade McGahey and a few others in the Union got together with Kinnock for an early morning pot of tea and an anti-Scargill chin-wag. Is this true? As we go to press, there has been no comment from either the Party leadership or the *Star*. When we phoned the Scottish Area NUM office, comrade McGahey was unavailable for comment. However, if communists in the NUM are beginning to directly line up with Kinnock and his drive to gut the workers movement of fighting spirit, we must be told.

June's Communist (the turgid Straight Leftists' hard face) is interesting for what is not in it. Not once in its 29 shoddily typed pages is the PPPS AGM mentioned. This is no minor question. The future of our Party is at stake. Communists will be judged on whether they stand for or against the Party, its candidates and motions. Perhaps the results were just too late to include, perhaps the editor feared his rag being dated? Whatever the case it is very, very convenient *Communist* only comes out six times a year. So surely publication could have been slightly early to give its readers 'the line'? Or could it not have been delayed just a bit so as to allow analysis of the results, including how the Straight Leftists voted? But so fearful are these centrists of taking an unambiguous position against Chater, so fearful of losing even more rank and file support if they call for a vote for 'the Euros' (ie the Party), they will not openly state what their position is. It seems the days when they fielded their own candidates and actively intervened in the AGMs are long gone. Why is this? More importantly how did you vote comrade Straight Leftist, for the Chaterites, the FC, did you abstain or have a 'free' vote? What was your position on the Party's motions and those on class war prisoners, the dictatorship of the proletariat and Ireland? Why are you keeping so quiet?

As is often the case workers in the midst of a hard struggle will go beyond the calls of revolutionaries. We have been poo-pooed for suggesting the strikers at Wapping form Workers' Defence Corps. Well, not content to form hit squads, like the heroic miners of 1984-5, they have set up hit battalions. On July 6 about 300 men staged a well planned attack on a regional distribution depot of Murdoch's Wapping-based newspapers. Bricks were thrown at TNT lorries, bolts and ball bearings were also pelted at the building. Police sources are reported to have said "evidence existed connecting print workers with the incident". No arrests were made. Perhaps if such organisation could be applied by chief marshall Mike Hicks to Wapping itself fewer people might have been arrested and the plant closed. Already about one thousand have been hauled away by the police with little damage done to Murdoch to show for it.

Aydan Bulutgil was a student at Birmingham University in the 1970s. He was a founder member of the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain and an active fighter for Turkish migrant workers and their trade union rights. He was imprisoned in 1981 on the allegation that he was one of the leaders of the pre-1980 'official' Communist Party of Turkey. He has been so heavily tortured that he is now crippled. He is serving a 16 year sentence. The barbarity of the Ankara regime is in many ways exemplified by its treatment of Aydan Bulutgil. Because of this the Aydan Bulutgil Campaign has been set up by the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey. Petitions demanding his release and more information can be obtained from CDDRT, 129 Newington Green Road, London N1 4RQ



The next edition of *The Leninist* will be on September 1. Either this edition or the one after will see our paper increase in size, first on an occasional basis, then regularly. In the meantime our £600 fighting fund must be met. Our Summer Offensive is now in full swing. Pledges of money have come in at a record level and one comrade has already met her target of giving three weeks income to *The Leninist* and is now aiming to surpass it. Our readers have also been generous. Since the last edition we have received £366. Unfortunately this leaves us £94 short in our £600 monthly target. This must be met. The fighting fund is an absolute necessity if our fortnightly is to expand. We urge you, our readers, our friends, our fellow communists, to support our existing level of work while our Summer Offensive comrades work their guts out for the future. If you step in and give a hand we can really take strides forward. You know we can produce results. Come on, whether you're low paid, unemployed, or on a pension, or whatever, you can't afford not to give to *The Leninist*, the objective situation demands money off you now.



The recent publication in English of the programme of the Communist Party of Turkey — Ischinin Sesi is an important event for communists in Britain. It allows us to examine and learn from a truly Leninist document.

PROGRAMME FOR REVOLUTION

THE PUBLICATION of a programme is an important event in the life of any Communist Party. Unfortunately new programmes invariably represent the consolidation of previous steps to the right both in the realm of practice and theory. The reason for this can be found in the decay and disintegration of our world communist movement. This has led to a steady and general drift to the right and this in turn leads to political and then organisational liquidationism.

Such opportunism has been codified and excused in the programmes of our fraternal parties. Of course appearances have to be kept up. The programmes of communist parties have to adhere to the established style and form, if not the essence, of a revolutionary programme. More than that, given the need to conform with the appearance of Marxism-Leninism, opportunism cannot be proudly proclaimed, it must be introduced dishonestly by stealth and sleight of hand. The result can only be inconsistent, shabby and superficial.

So, while peppered with references to Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism, these programmes are flawed when it comes to the struggle for working class power and the communist future. At best they are centrist mishmashes containing both orthodox ideas as well as opportunist ones. At worst they are downright dishonest, using the odd plucked out of context phrase from Marx or Lenin as a Trojan Horse to excuse the most outrageous revisionism.

Take our own Communist Party's *British Road to Socialism*. It is one of those outrageously revisionist programmes. Not content with worshipping bourgeois legality, parliamentarianism and pacifism, it contains within it the seeds of the Party's liquidationism, with its faith in and commitment to the ability of the Labour Party to act as a vehicle of socialist transformation.

Typically, the Party's loyalty to its own few healthy programmatic positions has been tenuous. The 1969 edition contained a short passage demanding British withdrawal from Ireland and Irish unity. One year later when the development of a revolutionary situation in the Six Counties made this position a vital practical demand, it was ditched without the least compunction, although its presence in the *BRS* remained a constant embarrassment.

In 1977 a new draft of the Party's programme was published. It was the Eurocommunists who stamped it with their political positions. The final version as passed by that year's congress certainly represented a crystallisation of Eurocommunist politics at that stage of its evolution.

Despite this the Communist Campaign Group now defend this revisionism as its bible. And as we know the Euro comrades have now, along with most opportunists in the workers' movement, speeded up their course to the right.

As a result mutterings are to be heard from their camp about the need to revise the *BRS* simply because it is now not right wing enough.

If there are degrees of uselessness, who can doubt their new programme will be even more useless than the other editions when it comes to the struggle for socialism.

Regeneration

Thankfully all is not bleak in our world communist movement. There are the early but unmistakeable signs of regeneration. This can be seen in the publication of *The Leninist* and its steady growth from a quarterly to a monthly and then from a monthly to a fortnightly. But at this moment in time the central agent of regeneration is the Communist Party of Turkey — *Workers' Voice*. It has not only taken the lead in fighting for the principles of Marxism-Leninism but is rapidly spreading its international influence (see box) and is successfully digging roots amongst the masses in Turkey.

The fact that it has just published its programme in English* gives us an ideal opportunity to look at the communist movement in Turkey and why it is important for communists throughout the world to learn its lessons.

Turkey's position as a medium developed capitalist country makes it a weak link of imperialism, just as Russia was before October 1917. This means bourgeois democracy is never stable and is transparently a sham, certainly far more so than in advanced capitalist countries.

Revolutionary waves have repeatedly swept over the country threatening to destroy the capitalist system itself. In response to this the bourgeoisie have time and time again abandoned the pretence of ruling democratically and resorted to fascist, semi-fascist and authoritarian methods to fend off the masses.

The last time this happened was in September 1980 when the army acting on behalf of finance capital staged a fascist military coup in an effort to restore bourgeois law and bourgeois order. Despite the counterrevolutionary terror, which saw tens of thousands of revolutionaries and democrats imprisoned and brutally tortured, over the last few years, slowly but surely, the masses have regained their confidence and the initiative.

Under mass pressure the fascist military regime has all but disintegrated. It has been replaced by an authoritarian civilian government that is itself in danger of being undermined by the masses and their yearning for democracy. Indeed it must be said that all the signs are that Turkey will in the not too distant future experience a revolutionary wave that will dwarf the one that spanned the 1970s. Fortunately the working class in Turkey now have the CPT — *Workers' Voice*.

We have not the slightest hesitation in arguing that its accumulated ideological positions, crystallised in its programme, are a treasure house for communists the world over. The ever-changing conditions in Turkey, the endemic crisis of the 'official' Party, and the historic militancy of its working class, have demanded and produced a Leninist renaissance.

It is inevitable that we will have a few minor differences with the CPT — *Workers' Voice* programme. But this does not for one moment detract from our admiration of it. Indeed in terms of exactness, logic and richness the CPT — *Workers' Voice* have undoubtedly produced a programme which is the most advanced yet to be seen in our world communist movement. It, of course, stands on the shoulders of Lenin's Bolsheviks but it has none of the obvious imperfections of the RCP(B)'s Second Programme — admitted by Lenin — nor its inevitable limitations as a model for today given the passage of time and significantly different conditions in the Soviet Union and the world as a whole.

Unfortunately the CPSU's Third Programme as amended at the 27th Party Congress not only surgically removed the absurd and madcap goals and claims it contained when it was first published in 1961 but, although it is crudely based on the First and Second Programmes their commitment to world revolution and genuine internationalism have been left out.

Worker's Voice programme

The CPT — *Workers' Voice* programme avoids the opportunist pitfalls of leftist utopian dreaming and rightist so-called 'common sense' practicality. It combines a scientific analysis of what is, with Leninist understanding of the political and organisational methods that need to be employed if tomorrow's revolution and communism is to triumph over today's forces of reaction.

The CPT — *Workers' Voice* programme has in other words a firm grasp of the immediate tasks before communists in Turkey, the advanced democratic nature of the coming revolution, the importance of the Kurdish question, and how to mobilise women and youth. In these areas it brilliantly uses the Marxist-Leninist method to link today's struggles with the aim of communism.

More over it takes full cognizance of the crisis in our world communist movement and the problems of living socialism. Central importance is quite correctly given to the international position of the proletariat, above all need to tilt the world balance of forces in favour of socialism through making new revolutions. Nonetheless the crucial question of developing democracy and overcoming bureaucracy in the existing socialist countries, (and in the Turkey of the future), is not shirked.

Indeed the programme is a truly Leninist document in that it is able to combine international and national tasks, short term and long term goals, criticism of the world communist movement (including ruling parties) with a partisan defence of the gains of our working class.

Centrist bankruptcy

The CPT — *Workers' Voice* emerged from a sharp ideological struggle which took place in the 'official' CPT in the late 1970s. In an honest and principled attempt to bring much needed clarity to the CPT — dominated as it was by eclectic centrism — comrade R. Yurukoglu, a member of the Party's Central Committee, published his *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism* in February 1978.

He argued that the revolutionary situation that then gripped the country, demanded the rigorous application of Marxist-Leninist theory, so as to understand Turkey's intermediate place in the world imperialist pecking order and thus the objective basis of Turkey's crises. He showed that the crisis of capitalism in Turkey, its domination by imperialism, the emergence of finance capital and its need but inability to become imperialist, was making working class economic struggles increasingly political and this was becoming permanent.

If fascism was to be avoided and the revolutionary situation was not to be drowned in blood, the working class must, Yurukoglu wrote, lead what the CPT calls the Advanced Democratic People's Revolution. His analysis also led him to point to the need for the working class to take the democratic revolution uninterruptedly towards socialist tasks if the gains of the revolution were to be consolidated and extended.

Above all he insisted that as the objective conditions for revolution were fully ripe the subjective factor — namely the CPT — was pivotal in resolving the revolution positively. The CPT must be innovative, it must expose social democracy not tail it, and he concluded with the call for the CPT to organise the working class to make revolution.

The centrist leadership of the CPT at first reacted in stunned silence, then offered faint praise. But because of a desire to hatch a deal with social democracy and a fear of revolution, after much dithering in July 1979 *Atılım* — the organ of the CPT Central Committee — launched a slander campaign against Leninists in the Party. Far from this being confined to the ideological sphere the leadership began to systematically expel all members and CPT organisations defending Leninist positions.

They treated the Party as their private property, they ignored laid down rules and procedures, dispensed with the need for even the semblance of discussion. It was the

leadership which was therefore responsible for splitting the CPT down the middle and leaving the Party with an 'official' opportunist 'Menshevik' wing and a revolutionary Leninist wing.

Problems

The emergence of a Leninist wing of the CPT excited much interest in Turkey and amongst the Turkish migrant communities scattered across Western Europe. *Iscinik Sesi (Worker's Voice)* the paper of the British Region was first relaunched as a vehicle for conducting open ideological struggle in the Party and then became the organ of the Party's Leninist wing.

Iscinik Sesi — although singled out for banning by the Turkish authorities — found a ready audience. The revolutionary situation ensured this as it did the spontaneous emergence of groups of revolutionaries wanting to join the Party now it had a Leninist wing.

As well as this being unquestionably positive, a vindication of the Leninist's open ideological struggle, it had certain unavoidable negative features. There were one day converts, fiefs, and unevenness of development between the various Party organisations.

In Istanbul good links were established with working class militants. But early advances were set back after a silly flirtation by cadres sent over from Britain with a very dubious group going under the name of Partisan Yol. The Aegean region had different problems. It contained within it a left wing and a right wing — an unhealthy opportunist carry over from the 'official' CPT. In contrast the Ankara organisation consisted overwhelmingly of students who did not come from the CPT but were sympathisers. The British organisation (the CPT's third largest region before the split) went over to the Leninists lock, stock and barrel. There was therefore a serious gap, in terms of development, cadre training and experience between it and other Leninist organisations in both Turkey and European countries like Federal Germany and France.

Thus, the Leninist wing, while it had extremely capable leaders, suffered from the unplanned manner in which it was formed. Its constituent organisations therefore had different traditions, origins and compositions. Lack of experience in the Party meant that some areas lacked any trained cadres, resulting in organisational and political mistakes. In others comrades came over to the Leninist wing on bloc rather than be recruited individually as should have been the case in less hectic conditions, this led to group and not Party loyalty and even problems of factionalism.

Overcoming problems

The First Conference of the Leninists of the CPT took place in February 1980. It was organised so as to take the struggle of the Leninists in the Party to a higher level by overcoming the various weaknesses of its organisations. This marked an important turning point of the internal struggle in the CPT. It was resolved to prepare new rules and programme for submission to a Leninist organised Fifth Congress of the CPT. The conference adopted measures which enabled those rebelling against opportunism to coordinate themselves.

The conference was also intended to bring the forces of Leninism together in terms of Party culture and to bring them under centralised and disciplined leadership. Unfortunately this proved impossible to fully carry out.

Given an extended period, with patient ideological struggle and a firm central organisational hand inherited problems could have been slowly overcome through practice. But politics in Turkey allow no such luxuries. In September 1980 the fascist coup violently disrupted the plans for development made at the First Conference. What is more, shortly after the conference the Leninist wing suffered some significant arrests in Turkey. This exacerbated the existing problems.

The Ankara region was plagued with conflict. Workers coming into the Party were considered rightists by the student forces which dominated the organisation. This was hardly positive.

In the Aegean there were great difficulties in integrating the comrades into the Party as a whole simply because most had come over to the Leninist wing, and joined it, as groups with existing leaders. This organisation had played a magnificent role at the Middle East Technical University. In the presence of General Evren, the chief of staff and the future military dictator, they drowned the chauvinist national anthem with the 'International'.

This demonstration of militancy hit the headlines and was denounced by the Mensheviks as a provocation but it brought joy and inspiration to the millions who longed for liberation. Nonetheless the 'clannish' relations between the leaders and rank and file tended to offset many of the positive features of this regional organisation and its work. The Second Conference of the Leninists took place in March 1981. An organised retreat was decided upon. This was duly carried out and put the Leninists in a strong position to survive the fascist terror of the next few years, and then take advantage of the gradual opening up of legal possibilities, when after the introduction of a new constitution in 1982 fascism began to disintegrate. Thus between the years 1980 to 1984 when virtually every other revolutionary group experienced crisis and a melting away of supporters the Leninists were able to keep their links with the masses alive. Copies of *Worker's Voice* (*Iscinik Sesi*) along with numerous pamphlets continued to be smuggled into the country and circulate widely, even in the prisons.

Fifth Congress

The organisation of the Leninists reached a new stage in 1985 when the Fifth Congress — the first since 1932 — was held. The congress voted to form a new party — The Communist Party of Turkey — *Worker's Voice*. Because of this the congress was called the First Congress as well as the Fifth Congress. This 5(1) description was designed to indicate communist continuity with the party founded in 1920 and the fact that there had been a final organisational break with the opportunists.

The Menshevik opportunists cobbled together their own 'Fifth Congress' in 1984 but this was a feeble propaganda stunt not a genuine congress. It was convened purely with the idea of preempting the Leninists, it excluded all oppositionist tendencies, not least the Leninists, so it was totally unrepresentative. Moreover it was ideologically bankrupt.

In the midst of fascism's disintegration the Mensheviks decided for their own peculiar reasons to label the regime 'fascist'. This was despite the fact that since 1980 they had insisted there was no fascist regime in Turkey, only fascist elements. Now, when there was a civilian government under Ozal, a vocal parliamentary opposition, legal strikes and mass demonstrations, the springing up of extra-parliamentary political parties and increasingly sharp press criticism of the lack of democracy in Turkey, they decided this was fascism.

Not surprisingly the following couple of years have seen the Menshevik leaders of the 'official' CPT becoming desperate to block the growth of *Worker's Voice* and keep their own party from completely collapsing. Predictably their theoretical poverty, political dishonesty, organisational ineptitude have only resulted in countless factions and the falling away of droves of experienced cadres. Indeed in an effort to crush internal dissent the 'officials',

under General Secretary Haydar Kutlu, have closed their 'own' CPT organisations one after another, not only in Berlin, Frankfurt, Denmark, Holland and France but also in Turkey. As a result there has been a decrease in their party's work to the point where many of its members now openly talk of the CPT being 'finished'.

In contrast the CPT — *Worker's Voice* has gone from strength to strength. As well as pulling off spectacular propaganda coups like their two pirate TV broadcasts, they have made strenuous efforts to shift the weight of the Party from being centred abroad to being one solidly based in Turkey with deep roots amongst the working class.

This perspective was fully debated and clarified at a conference held in January. It brought together comrades from the Party's organisations in Britain, Germany, France and other European countries as well as those delegates who had made their way out of Turkey in order to attend.

The aim of the conference was to put into motion the organisational resolutions of the Fifth Congress, particularly those concerning the need to shift the main thrust of the Party's work to Turkey and fully exploit legal possibilities there. To do this was necessary to engage in communist criticism and self-criticism.

The conference noted the growth of the Party, its impact on the masses and the esteem in which it is held. The ideological and political incisiveness of its leadership is also widely respected as is the Party's central organ — *Iscinik Sesi (Worker's Voice)*. Despite this there are still serious weaknesses.

A genuine Communist Party — unlike our leadership and centrist opposition — does not fear to admit its faults, indeed this is the first step to overcoming them. So 'fault finding' was at the top of the conference agenda.

The conference collectively decided after much debate that there was too little direct communication between the leadership and the rank and file and vice versa. Too much information was passing through the medium of the middle-rank leaders and thus getting slowed down, distorted and made lifeless.

This will be rectified. More attention is to be placed on developing meetings directly between the leadership and the rank and file, as well as raising the level of Party culture and discipline in the cells. Party leaders, in particular members of the Central Executive Bureau, must not act like regional and cell secretaries but as leaders of the Party as a whole. These measures will strengthen the leadership, the middle leaders and the rank and file.

The conference also turned its attention to the problems experienced by cadres in Turkey. Those going back after lengthy exile abroad find difficulties in adjusting to the harsh realities of life there. Those who have lived and survived underground find it difficult to take advantage of the new conditions in Turkey and the possibilities of mass work.

These problems cannot be easily overcome.

Nonetheless some quick results can be made through forcing cadres to break from their old habits. For instance the conference resolved to instruct Party professionals in Turkey to get part time jobs. This will bring them into contact with ordinary working people and counteract isolation from them brought about by living underground or abroad. It also serves to put an end to the wrong idea that the Party must financially support its cadres as a matter of course.

Turning outwards

Above all it was decided that everything must be geared to turning the Party outwards and linking it firmly to that broad mass of young workers who have sympathy with the left. This section of the population is particularly large in Turkey given its class and demographic structure. It is looking for militant action to solve its economic problems and knows that only a new socio-economic system can really bring change. It is therefore the most advanced section of the working class and the key section to win if the coming revolutionary wave is to this time end in victory.

The *Worker's Voice* comrades realise that to secure the loyalty of this strategically vital section of the working class they will have to first politically defeat a host of 'left' and right opportunist groupings who are at present putting themselves forward as the answer to Turkey's chronic state of crisis.

To facilitate this the conference was used as an ideal opportunity to assess the various strengths and weaknesses of the competing groups. With this knowledge propaganda and agitation can be accurately employed to expose them in theory and practice. The groups which the CPT — *Worker's Voice* needs to overcome were broadly characterised as direct rivals on the one hand and indirect rivals on the other.

The former included not only revolutionary groups like the semi-Enverist TDKP but more importantly the right opportunists of TSIP, TIP, Perincek and the Mensheviks as well as the social democracy of the liberal bourgeoisie. These tendencies will be singled out for systematic polemic while the indirect rivals, the myriad of leftist factions, movements, grouplets, and 'parties' can be overcome simply through the ability of the CPT — *Worker's Voice* to prove itself the Party in practice.

Certainly if the negative habits, prejudices and weaknesses the conference pinpointed can be overcome it will not be too long before the CPT — *Worker's Voice* can begin to really act as the general staff of the working class in Turkey and in due course turn Turkey from a weak link of imperialism into a strong link in the chain of socialism.

Jack Conrad

* Communist Party of Turkey — *Worker's Voice* Programme and Rules, *Iscinik Sesi* English Publications, London, May 1986, pp.107, £1.50 (including p&p) from *Iscinik Sesi* Publications PO Box 407, London E16 2EA

JOINT STATEMENT

To the workers and working people of Turkey and Iran

The revolutionary struggle in our region reached the boiling point in the 1970's. In Turkey there was a revolutionary situation. In 1978 there was a victorious revolution in Afghanistan and in 1979 a revolution in Iran.

In the subsequent period, however, the revolution in Turkey was defeated and fascism came to power. Reaction gained strength in the region as a whole. The revolution in Iran, which was being carried out with mass participation on a scale seldom equalled in history, was also defeated.

Under the leadership of a growing working class movement, a new revolution is taking shape in Iran in the light of the lessons of the 1979 revolution. In Turkey a new and more profound revolutionary wave is approaching following the disintegration of fascism. The revolutionary unity of the workers is always and everywhere important. But in this period the unity of struggle and revolutionary solidarity of the workers of Iran and Turkey also has a special meaning.

This time, by raising their internationalist solidarity, the workers of the two countries will hasten the victory of the new revolution taking shape in Iran and the revolutionary wave approaching in Turkey. In this way, they will also have contributed to the rapid defeat of reaction in the region as a whole.

As the first step of this rising revolutionary solidarity.

1. We jointly condemn the regime in Iran which has thrown tens of thousands of revolutionaries into prison and tortured, hung and otherwise killed thousands more. We emphasize our solidarity with all political prisoners in Iran who are resisting savage repression and torture being implemented with medieval methods, and with the entire people who are resisting all manner of barbarous oppression.

A short time ago a group of comrades from the People's Fedaian heroically faced their own executions reaffirming their belief in the revolution. Moreover, at this moment hundreds of imprisoned comrades are steadfastly maintaining their revolutionary determination. These facts herald the certain destruction of this evil regime and the certain victory of the revolution in Iran.

2. We repeat once again that the Iran-Iraq war runs counter to the interests of all the peoples in the region and is a reactionary war of redistribution. In opposition to this unjust war, we issue a call for a just peace that will be established in accordance with the common interests of the peoples. We emphasize our solidarity with the struggle of the peoples of Iran and Iraq against the regimes of the two countries.

3. We fiercely condemn the extreme chauvinist repression to which the Kurdish people of both Turkey and Iran are subjected. We protest the regime in Turkey which is supporting the Iranian regime's

repression in Iranian Kurdistan as if the repression which it itself is applying in Turkish Kurdistan were not enough. We express our solidarity with the Kurdish people in both countries and defend with all our strength the right of this people to self-determination.

4. We jointly condemn the regime in Turkey which is bringing the working people face to face with starvation, keeping democratic rights in chains and spreading its reactionary hands throughout the entire region. The fact that the working class of Turkey has begun strikes, meetings and marches once again despite all the restrictions, heralds the end of this evil regime.

5. We express our solidarity with the struggle of the working class and, under its leadership, the working people of Turkey, to overthrow the regime in Turkey which is supporting all the reactionary forces in the region, with an advanced democratic people's revolution that will grow into socialism.

Long live proletarian internationalism!
Long live the unity of revolutionary struggle of the workers of Iran and Turkey!

Central Committee
Organisation of the Iranian
People's Fedaian
Central Committee
Communist Party
of Turkey —
Worker's Voice

20 May 1986



The Socialist Worker newspaper of June 7 contains between its pages an object lesson in "dialectics" for all Marxists. On page 10, Maureen Watson looks at the Popular Front in France during the crucial year of 1936.

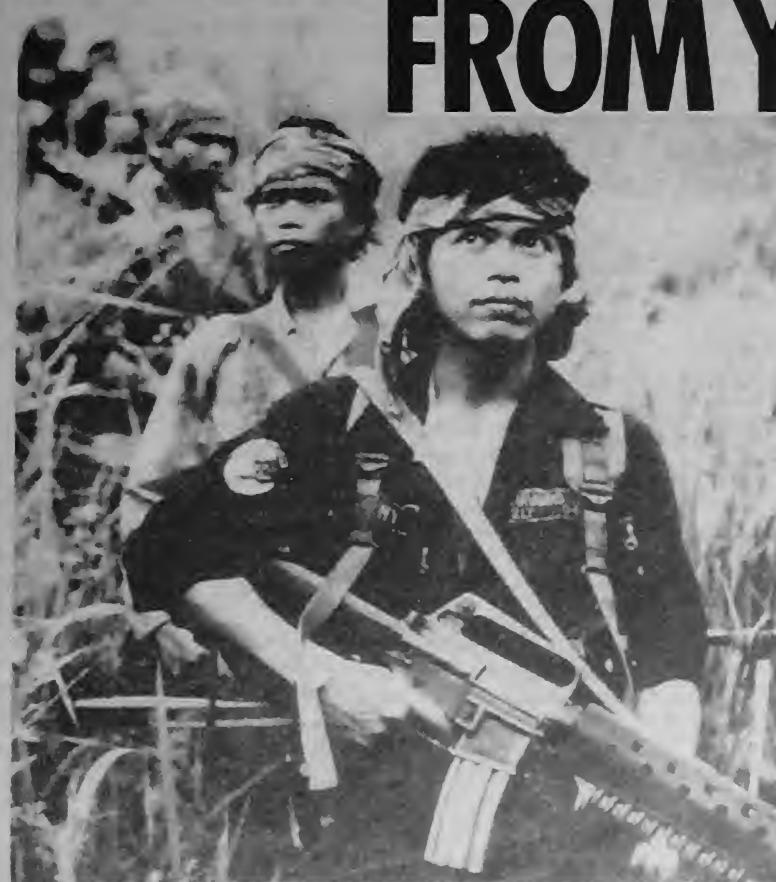
Conclusion: Popular Fronts are bad things. On page 6 of the same issue, Paul Foot ticks off journalist Julie Burchill for rubbishing the classic Popular Front-type body, the Anti-Nazi League, led of course, by the SWP. Implicit conclusion: Popular Fronts are good things. Dialectics, SWP style: The ability to hold two mutually contradictory views, simultaneously.

The letters page in Socialist Worker, on the other hand, keeps hitting the nail on the head with uncanny regularity. Interestingly, a recent missive is headlined with the question, 'Are we becoming the gutter press of the left?' Answers, on a postcard, to...

Comrade Martin Jacques had his street cred well and truly punctured recently. After a Marxism Today bash, Martin was dragged (against his better judgement we understand) to London's mecca of hip, the Mud Club. Comrade Jacques however, was not allowed past the door. He was told that he was too "boring and normal" to be allowed to 'skank' the night away with the nubile young hipsters inside. They have a point: dancing cheek to cheek with crusty old Neil Kinnock can ruin anybody's 'hep-cat' standing.

7 Days of July 5 has a rather thought-provoking article by Chris Tchaikovsky on Holloway prison. Along with predictable liberal hand-wringing was one truly interesting piece of information. Apparently Miss Davies, one of Holloway's warders, is (and we quote), "a really good screw". If there was any justice in the world, 7 Days' proof-readers would be taken out and shot down like dogs.

1986 apparently is the year in which that live-wire propaganda group, the Revolutionary Communist Party, plan "to take on the Labour Party". Judging from the May local council elections however, their sights ought to be set a little lower. RCP member Kerry Andrews for example, convinced 42 voters in Rectory ward in London that she was the woman for the job: in the same constituency, William Rogers of the crisis racked WRP got 54. Come off it, RCP.



FROM YELLOW TO RED

Tensions mount in the Philippines

PKP, but because the CPP is leading an insurgency force some 16,500 strong in the shape of the New Peoples Army, and a mass legal front organisation, the National Democratic Front, whereas the PKP is by and large ineffectual. But size is no criterion for the judgement of an organisation's Marxist-Leninist credentials, as we are the first to admit.

Aquino taking power has not suppressed the revolutionary situation. The chief of the armed forces, General Fidel Ramos, estimates that the NPA now controls about 18% of the countryside. Such a position of strength obviously worries Aquino, and since the election she has tried many ways to neutralise the guerrillas, appealing for national reconciliation coupled with such tactics as trying to divide the NPA by offering a region by region amnesty for NPA units.

Initially the CPP responded by escalating NPA actions, but now seems to be taking a more conciliatory attitude to the Aquino government. CPP founder Jose Maria Sison, is setting about establishing his own 'Peoples Party', projecting it as 'nationalist and militant'. It is unclear as yet whether this is an independent initiative or linked with the CPP. Along with this it is reported that a full CPP Politbureau meeting agreed to end the armed struggle in return for land reform and a cabinet seat. At the moment negotiations are taking place between the government and the CPP with a view to declaring a ceasefire.

Apparently this new line has not been well received in certain quarters: "many NPA commanders have pledged to continue the struggle until the two US bases are dismantled and the country is on a socialist path." (Financial Times June 6 1986) It seems unlikely that such a trend will remain a minority for long as mass pressure for action grows.

Such formulations as were developed in Sison's 1970 thesis, advocating a "peoples' democratic state system of the proletariat, petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and all other patriots," fudges the vital question of hegemony and more dangerously can, as we now see, be used to justify entry into a 'national bourgeois' government under Aquino.

The PKP has gone from branding Aquino's husband, killed by Marcos, as a CIA agent, and proclaiming Marcos a progressive in the 70s to altering the direction of its sycophantic cant to Aquino. Its *Open Letter to Aquino*, reprinted in the *Morning Star* on May 9 1986, begins "We join with the rest of the Filipino nation in congratulating you in your successful assumption of the presidency of this country... As Filipinos who are fighting for a just and progressive society, we cannot ignore such a call for national unity, especially today when the country is confronted with its worst post-war economic crisis and the attendant social problems arising from it." Surely communists should be taking advantage of the "worst post-war economic crisis", using it to expose capitalism, and struggling for its revolutionary overthrow as the only way out, not seeking 'national unity' with the capitalists? And by the way, the "attendant social problems" the PKP comrades want to alleviate is a 'revolutionary situation' to you and me. The letter continues, offering

Aquino "all out support to your administration" and ending: "As a political and unarmed party in a pluralistic society, we claim the right to operate legally just like the other political parties." Really, these comrades give tailists a bad name!

Conclusion

Whilst the CPP is undoubtedly the more militant of the two parties, both hold to a Menshevik two stage theory of the Filipino revolution, one bourgeois democratic, the other socialistic in character, with an undefined period of time between the two. States always have a class nature, and even in an uninterrupted revolution the proletariat must use its state to maintain its hegemony over its allies. Neither the CPP or PKP seem to have any understanding of this. Besides, it is unlikely that the Philippines can afford the luxury of a stable bourgeois democracy. A bourgeois government which cannot feed the masses, which must super exploit them to survive cannot rule by consent, nor afford to let the masses express an opinion of it. Marcos' repressive policies were dictated by absolute necessity. The same necessity still exists today, economic determinants cannot be dismissed with a change of government.

Before the split giving birth to the two separate parties the old PKP vacillated between guerrillaism and parliamentarianism. Events internally and on a world scale in the mid to late 60s caused the separation of these two characteristics of communism in the Philippines. The CPP took many of the old, and developed new party militants, but it has never qualitatively broken from its centrist past, hence its class collaborationist positions and uncertain attitude to the Aquino regime today. It has its emphasis on the rural guerrilla struggle, in effect neglecting the organisation of the mass urban proletariat, the only consistently revolutionary class.

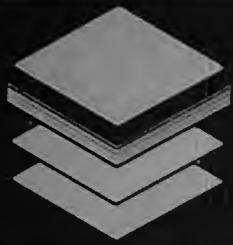
Such a class basis as the peasantry will inevitably lead to the inconsistencies shown by the CPP.

The Philippines is a medium developed capitalist country. It has a relatively well developed industrial sector, endemic finance capital and consequently a large working class. But it is prevented from expanding by the existing imperialist powers, who also super exploit it. This puts a double yoke on the shoulders of the working class, facilitating their radicalisation.

The bourgeoisie, of whatever section, are not willing or able to fight for national liberation; they are mortgaged to imperialism. Such a task is closely related to that of socialism and relies on the proletariat and its party. As comrade Yurukoglu of the CPT-Isin Sesi put it, "no revolutionary democratic transformation that does not turn into socialist revolution through the Leninist process of uninterrupted revolution, that does not smash the bourgeois dictatorship with the dictatorship of the proletariat, can provide lasting solutions to any problem or protect any gain." (Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism, p.140)

This must be the task of communists in the Philippines today. Turn the yellow revolution red.

Alan Merrick



BOOK

Contagious desire

David Black *The Plague years: A Chronicle of AIDS: the epidemic of our times*. Picador, pp.177, £3.50.

AIDS as far as the new sexual moralists are concerned could have been a disease made in heaven: its link with homosexual sex provided the opportunity to whip up an anti-gay backlash that would wipe out the limited gains that gays and lesbians have made in the past twenty years or so. The disease is being linked explicitly by some commentators to a notion of divine or natural 'vengeance' on those who deviate from the sexual norm. An editorial in the American publication, the *Southern Medical Journal* in 1984 asks:

"Might we be witnessing, in fact, in the form of a modern communicable disorder, a fulfilment of St. Paul's pronouncement: 'the due penalty of their error.'"

Of course, Black in his book is at pains to attack this notion. As he correctly points out:

"The fear of AIDS — rather than AIDS itself — is part of a wave of reaction that is spreading across the western democracies, a retreat from the freedom — or, depending on your point of view, the licence — that overwhelmed us in the 1960s and early 1970s."

He even half recognises that the atmosphere of irrationality and social nervousness that the hysteria about 'unclean sex' stirs up, lends support to other oppressive laws and measures that the bourgeoisie may feel constrained to introduce as the social fabric of a crisis-wracked capitalist society begins to unravel before their eyes:

"Fear feeds homophobia and promotes anti-gay legislation, which can be a model for more generalised repression. It fuels violence against gays, which feeds a more general violence in society at large."

Black's book however, is really less about the specific terror that is the AIDS epidemic, and more about his own feelings of panic and disorientation, feelings that are beginning to affect not only liberal

journalists like himself, but also to rip through the US petty bourgeoisie in general. In the introduction, Black illustrates just how despairing the boom-babies of the affluent post-War West are beginning to feel:

"At the birthday party of a friend's five-year-old, I talked to a doctor who has treated many people with AIDS.

"Our generation had the best of it", he said. "Even if for only a short time ... We could run amok with sex, plunge into sex, explore it as if we were on some safe safari in a wildlife sanctuary..."

"He gestured towards the boys and girls in the back yard who were doing the five-year-old equivalent of flirting.

"What we've seen of AIDS is just the beginning," he said. "What do you think sex is going to be like for them when they grow up? God help them!"

Black exercises his angst over 177 pages: he begins to bore after around 10. A typical product of the turgid 'Me' journalism of the 'Me' generation, Black insists on filling us in on his family background, the moral evolution that he underwent through his early years, and the challenge that AIDS presented to his notions of his own liberation and (... yawn ...) tolerance. And you thought you were just buying a book about AIDS, you poor sucker! For reasons best known to himself, Black presumes the reader will be interested in the fact that on the afternoon when he cornered him for an interview, Dr. Joseph Sonnenbend, one of the discoverers of Interferon and a founder of the AIDS Medical Foundation:

"... wore a grey cardigan that almost reached his knees and baggy pants with crumpled cuffs. He sat like a kid with one foot hooked around the other ankle. And when he hung up the phone and crossed the room he walked like a child, taking large steps and not moving his shoulders." (p.88)

How fascinating! And well worth £3.50 of anyone's money to learn, don't you feel?

The book ends with Black attempting to calm the fears he feels he may have whipped up in his peers. 'Nobody panic', he hysterically shouts at the top of his voice:

"It will all turn out to be very innocent. Very simple. The great London plague was caused by the city's communal pump. They stopped using the pump, and the plague went away." (p.177)

In other words, presumably, Black advises surrender to the onslaught of the right's moralists, the drying up of "the pump" of gay love/sex relations themselves. If he does he ought to openly say so; and if he does, his book stinks worse than it already does.

Alec Long



POLEMIC

Militant realism

Rank and File Miners Movement, *Rank and File Miner*, no.4 May/June 1986. pp.10, £0.20p.

AGAIN, THE National Rank and File Miners' Movement (NRFMM) produce an excellent, informative and militant paper. Its front page pinpoints one of the key issues facing the workers' movement: the cancer of 'New Realism' and the lurch to the right in the official leadership and structures of the Labour movement. It wades in against the champions of 'New Realism' in the NUM itself:

"In Scotland the leadership are insistent that it is only by meeting police chiefs, judges, church people etc etc can the miners be saved, while rigid control is exerted over the flow of ideas and political debate amongst the men. In Wales the slaughter continues and the leadership stalks the valleys with the gospel according to 'Kim Howells' telling the miners the working class is dead. In Yorkshire men born on the left, who hold their positions because the left organised and agitated, condemn such activity now, become 'new realists' on the NEC..."

In contrast, the miners, pit women and their supporters who are involved in *Rank and File Miner* are determined to "use the lessons they've learnt in the strike to rebuild the NUM ready for the battles ahead." A laudable aim. But how do we go about it?

Most interesting in this context is an interview with Paul Whetton of Beavercoates, Notts. Rank and file miners and their leaders in the scab stronghold of Notts, are up against the sharp end of the Board's offensive against the NUM. Paul makes clear that a vicious war of position is being conducted in Notts against the scab cancer of the UDM.

"In my own pit we finished the 84/85 strike with 100 strikers out of an industrial workforce of 1,100. Come the political levy ballot we had over 200 and by the end of February 370 NUM members."

Of course, as Paul points out, "an



A New Partnership

The Super-scabs: how to fight them?

attempt to invite the UDM back en bloc" as some 'soft' elements on the NUM NEC have suggested, "will be fiercely resisted in the Notts coalfield". But as the union itself is progressively made weaker by the management, the danger of such a rotten compromise becomes all the more real. In Scotland for example, the rightist drift of the leadership has been facilitated and speeded up by the destruction of the Scottish union's basic infrastructure. The Sunday Post of June 22 reports that today there are now fewer than 7000 miners in the Area: pre-strike it was around 14,000.

This 50% drop in membership has hammered the revenue of the union. *Scottish Miner* has ceased publication altogether and they are even now debating in Edinburgh whether they can afford to replace comrade Mick McGahey when he retires as full-time Scottish Area NUM president. The NUM up there however, is not planning to just rely on such 'natural wastage' to cut costs. The vice-president's job, currently filled by comrade George Bolton, another Communist Party member, faces the axe.

In other Areas, there is a less dramatic, but just as steadily sapping of the strength of the National Union of Mineworkers. And as the union's life-blood is drained away in this way, the danger of a bureaucratic, rotten bloc with the scab UDM becomes more and more real in our view.

The *Rank and File Miner* in many articles points the way forward to avoid this lingering death of the union. As one report from Kent bluntly puts it:

"For us there is no middle way now. We have to fight for our very survival as a militant workers' union."

And in order for the union to 'survive' it must remain a "militant"

organisation. Retreat and accommodation to the enemy will simply encourage them to demand ever more from the union. The rank and file must take the lead in fighting back against the onslaught of the bosses. Thus, one of the most encouraging aspects of the paper are the reports on the back page of the miners' continued fight around the country: rank and file members in twelve pits in Yorkshire now produce a regular, militant newsletter: miners in Frickley pit put together a newsheet called *Voice of Frickley* and the rank and file newsletter in Armthorpe, *Tannoy*, appears under the slogans Participate — Communicate — Organise.

The NRFMM needs to take the last of these clarion calls to heart and begin to give a militant organisational lead where the national union is failing to. But also, it needs to make sure that the organisation of the NUM's militant rank and file does not remain crippled by the politics of the past. Old fashioned industrial militancy a la Scargill was shown to be inadequate to win battles of the scale and sweep of the miners' Great Strike of 1984-85. This issue of the paper, as have earlier ones, advertises the National Minority Movement pamphlet reprinted in the strike by advanced militants from the London Miners' Support movement. But we would add, there is no way you can effectively fight for a NMM-type body without at the same time fighting for a genuine Communist Party — the organisation that set up and gave the NMM its direction and vitality in the first place.

We encourage all readers of *The Leninist* to get hold of a copy of *Rank and File Miner*. It is available from Darren Moore, PO Box 3, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire.

Ian Mahoney



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The real test of internationalism

THE RECENT Anti-Apartheid demonstration in London brought one hundred thousand people plus out to protest against the imperialist oppression of the masses in South Africa, and in support of the liberation movement, the ANC. Some few months earlier a similar anti-imperialist demonstration in London was only able to claim an absolute maximum of three thousand. How is this so? Is it because the anti-imperialist struggle being supported was too small, too obscure, to generate much enthusiasm or interest? Far from it: it was the annual commemoration of Bloody Sunday, when soldiers murdered fourteen unarmed republicans in Derry. The imperialist power was not comfortably far off in South Africa, but British.

Scandalously, very few members of our Communist Party marched against British imperialism on that day. Eurocommunist, Communist Campaign Group and Straight Leftist alike were noticeable for their absence. Yet all were present for June's Anti-Apartheid demo. Why is this? All, from the neo-Fabians of the *Marxism Today* camp to the r-revolutionaries of Straight Leftism stand against the founding principles of our Party, a Party which launched the Hands off Ireland campaign and hailed the cause of Irish republicanism. They excuse their somewhat selective 'internationalism' by condemning the 'terrorism' and 'sectarianism' of the Irish republican movement, their supposed neglect of legal opportunities, and even that they cannot support 'non-socialists'.

The Provisional IRA has long been attacked by opportunists in the

communist movement for its 'terrorism'. But it seems that they have a rather convenient 'blind spot'. In one breath they will condemn the military campaign in the Six Counties and with the next praise to high heaven a similar campaign pursued by the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). The MKs aren't fighting their war by the Marquis of Queensbury rules any more than the IRA: "The Durban bomb injured 69. Bomb and landmine attacks have killed 20 in the past six months." (*Financial Times*, June 16 1986) This MK action was rightly reported approvingly in the *Morning Star* the following day, but you can imagine how an identical action in the Six Counties carried out by the IRA would be received by the same paper.

Such opportunists attempt to justify their chauvinist cant by claiming that republican violence alienates the Protestant working class, and therefore is largely to blame for the absence of that elusive creature, 'unity' in Ireland. But these same sham internationalists would be outraged, and rightly so, if the same were to be said of the violence of the MKs, and of the revolutionary youth in the townships. Apparently, we are supposed to accept that in South Africa the working class is divided by apartheid, but in Ireland the cause of the division is not British imperialism, far from it, but 'sectarian violence', with the odd 'misconception' on the part of the Protestant working class thrown in for good measure.

Many crenuously attack the republican movement's 'militarism', and 'neglect of legal opportunities', often quoting Nelson Mandela's assertion that they did not take up



PLO, PIRA, MK: a wall mural in Belfast makes the point.

arms until all else had failed. Our CPGB's Irish 'expert', Bert Ward claimed in the *Morning Star* of August 5 1981, that "opportunities to conduct political struggle in Northern Ireland and South Africa", are "qualitatively different" because "the opportunity to organise in Northern Ireland was and is far superior to that in South Africa." This, however, did not prevent James Connolly from taking up arms against Britain. But on this point the voices of our opportunists are hushed. And besides, the Irish people have over centuries fought for freedom in many ways. The johnny-come-latelys of the British workers' movement, such as comrade Ward choose to forget this. But then they would, wouldn't they?

Not only the opportunists within our CPGB refuse support for the IRA 'because they are not socialists', but also the Labourites of *Militant*, also absent from republican events but present at the AAM demo. Marx and Lenin never placed such qualifications on their support for liberation movements. Marx stood four square with the Fenians, whose leaders he privately characterised as "mostly asses and partly exploiters", (*Ireland and the Irish Question*, p156) Besides, this is not seen as a block to support for the ANC, a representative of which stated at last year's AAM AGM that they were "not fighting for socialism".

Why then do the warring factions supporting *Marxism Today*, the CCG (whatever Mary Rosser may claim at the PPPS AGM, the facts scream 'liar' in her face), and *Straight Left* plus a variety of leftists outside of the CPGB, all line up objectively with their bourgeoisie

against the Irish liberation movement, but take such ever-so-defiant stands over South Africa? Is it because they have not read their Marx and Lenin close enough? We would contend that this sorry crowd knows its Marx and Lenin well enough, but consciously rejects it.

This is because they all place the interests of Britain, and by definition the British bourgeoisie, before the interests of the world revolution. It is their history and position within the workers' movement which obliges them to garb their social patriotism in internationalist language.

Comrade Jack Woddis, in the 1976 CPGB pamphlet *Southern Africa: Whose Side is Britain on?* justified the call for sanctions in terms of 'Britain's interests': "It is criminal that at a time of mass unemployment, partly arising because of the lack of domestic investment, British enterprises... should be planning further investment in South Africa." The opportunists see it as their job to advise their bourgeoisie, and so 7 Days of June 21 1986 proclaimed that "Thatcher takes the losing side". Obviously she doesn't read 7 Days, otherwise she would know. One wonders what today's patriots within the CPGB would do if they discovered that far from increasing unemployment etc, the super profits gained from South African investments actually cushioned Britain from the worst effects of the world economy's drift towards general crisis. Perhaps they will then see the benefit, as did Bernstein, of 'socialist colonialism'.

Communists fight always for political independence for the proletariat, but this entails uncompromising opposition to one's own bourgeoisie. Those that today stand with their 'own' bourgeoisie over Ireland, from comrades Martin Jacques to Fergus Nicholson, may soon find themselves in the same position over the South African revolution. Those who follow them, be warned.

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